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CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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J. ROGER DEAS, Secretary

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING - ROOM 252, CITY HALL
SAN FRANCISCO 2, CALIFORNIA

April 21, 1944

Board of Supervisors
Room 235 City Hall
San Francisco 2, California

Gentlemen:

On March 3, 1944, Bill No. 2781 proposing to rezone the Sunset District, was referred to the Planning Commission for report and recommendation, as required by the Charter.

Four well-attended public meetings and hearings were held on this question. After careful review of all arguments and communications, the Commission voted unanimously to approve the Bill with but one change: the Commercial districts on Lawton and Noriega should remain as now zoned.

The Commission further recommends that consideration be given to the establishment of a height limitation along 48th Avenue and the Great Highway. The Commission recommends a forty-foot height limit on structures on 48th Avenue and between 48th Avenue and the Great Highway. The Board of Supervisors has fixed height limits in the Marina and other districts, and has the right to establish similar regulations in the Sunset, subject to the approval of the Planning Commission. In this case, the approval of the Planning Commission has been given.

A report dealing more thoroughly with the various aspects of the Sunset rezoning problem is attached. It summarizes and reviews pertinent data and the major arguments for and against the rezoning proposal under the following heads:

1. Zoning Procedure in San Francisco.
2. The Present Development and Conditions in the Sunset District.
3. Summaries of Public Meetings and Hearings.
4. The Relationship of Zoning to the Master Plan.
5. Final Recommendations of the City Planning Commission.

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San Francisco (Calif.).
Dept. of City Planning.
Memorandum report,
rezoning of the Sunset
1944.

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Maps are attached showing the present zoning, the principal uses of property in the Sunset District, the recommended zoning plan and other matters referred to in the report.

It is the opinion of the City Planning Commission that the Sunset District should continue to grow and develop as an attractive single-family home neighborhood. The interests and investments of more than 10,200 homeowners and citizens with families will be better protected if the area is reclassified as a First Residential District.

As long as it is zoned Second Residential District it can become spotted with "flats, boarding and lodging houses, tenements, apartments and hotels", all of which are permitted by the zoning now in force. In the opinion of the Planning Commission, the neighborhood would be injured by the unregulated intrusion of structures of these types.

The Commission, therefore, supports the homeowners and improvement clubs of the district in their desire to have the Sunset area rezoned. It should appear on the official maps and records of the City as a First Residential District. The Board of Supervisors now has the power under the Charter to make the change recommended.

Respectfully submitted,

Gardner A. Dailey

Gardner A. Dailey
President

GAD:MJR
Attachments

CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
CITY HALL, SAN FRANCISCO

Master Plan Report No. 3
April 20, 1944

Memorandum Report

REZONING OF THE SUNSET DISTRICT

The records of the City Planning Commission show that the southwest quarter of the City has been developing steadily in recent years as a home district. That section along the Ocean, known generally as the Sunset District, is about two-thirds built up and is composed almost wholly of single-family homes. This District has been zoned Second Residential; the improvement clubs and property owners now want it rezoned and made a First Residential District. The City Planning Commission has held hearings on the matter and after thorough study of the zoning question and its relationship to the Master Plan recommends that the Sunset District be rezoned.

I - REZONING PROCEDURE IN SAN FRANCISCO

A comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to regulate the uses of land within the incorporated limits of the City and County of San Francisco was adopted October 3, 1921. Land uses throughout the City were classified and districts established for the following major types of uses:

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https://archive.org/details/memorandumreport2119sanf

1. FIRST RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT - for single-family residences only.

2. SECOND RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT - permitting single-family residences, "tenement houses, apartment houses, flats, boarding or lodging houses and hotels."

3. COMMERCIAL DISTRICT - permitting ordinary retail business uses, in addition to all types of dwellings.

4. LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - permitting light industrial uses.

5. HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - permitting heavy industrial uses.

6. UNRESTRICTED DISTRICT - no zoning restrictions.

The Zoning Ordinance was enacted by the Board of Supervisors; it was not acted upon by the people. The Board of Supervisors has full authority at any time, after report by the Planning Commission(1), to amend the Ordinance so that it may conform with changing conditions in the City.

Bill 2781, proposing to amend Section 2 of Ordinance 5464 by the substitution of revised property maps covering the Sunset District, to supersede maps No. 5 and No. 6 and all previous amendments thereto, was introduced to the Board of Supervisors on February 28, 1944. It was transmitted to the City Planning Commission, in accordance with Section 117 of the Charter, on March 3, 1944.

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(1) Under Section 117 of the Charter, amendments of the Zoning Ordinance by the Board of Supervisors are governed by the following proviso: "No ordinance shall be considered by the supervisors, the purpose or intent of which is the classification, regulation or control of the height, area, bulk, location or use of any building or buildings, or premise or premises, and classifying any property into any district or zone for such purposes, or establishing a setback line or lines along any street or portions thereof in the city and county without being first submitted to the city planning commission for report and recommendation."

II. - PRESENT DEVELOPMENT AND CONDITIONS IN THE SUNSET DISTRICT

The attached map, titled "Existing Land Uses", clearly shows that the Sunset District is predominantly a community of single-family homes. The map titled "Proposed Reclassification of the Sunset District" shows the zoning plan recommended by the City Planning Commission and indicates the existing zoning that would be changed by the adoption of this plan.

The Second Residential classification of the Sunset District was established 23 years ago, when the area was largely sand dunes. Regardless of the manner in which the district was originally zoned, it has developed as a single-family neighborhood. Only a few scattered multi-family residences have been introduced, most of them being along or near the district boundaries.

Some of the multi-family structures which have been built on corner lots are two-family buildings designed to harmonize with the adjacent single-family homes. When well done, these are inconspicuous and not unattractive. But 36 of the multi-family residences in the district are for 3 families or more, and some of the multi-family structures are definitely out of harmony with a single-family home neighborhood. Under the existing Zoning Ordinance "tenement houses, flats, boarding houses or lodging houses and hotels", of unlimited size and height, may be built in the Sunset District. The owner of single-family homes have no protection, therefore, against the introduction of such uses on the remaining vacant lots. This is true of the entire district, except Block 2192, and portions of Blocks 1862A, 1927A, 2033A, 2136, 2052A and 2135, where First Residential zoning is in effect.

III. - SUMMARY OF PERTINENT DATA

A - Existing Uses of All Land	No. of Lots
Single-Family Dwellings	10,200
Multi-Family Dwellings	208
Stores, Other Commercial	200
Undeveloped	5,392
Total - 317 Blocks	16,000

B - Existing Residential Use Ratios	Percent
Single-Family Dwellings	98
Multi-Family Dwellings	2
2 Families . . . . . 1.7%)	
3 or more Families . . . . . .3%)	
Total	100

C - Valuations	Assessed	Taxes Paid Annually
Developed Land (Residential)	$ 22,000,000	$ 1,000,000 (est.)
Vacant Land	1,750,000	160,000 (est.)
Total	$ 23,750,000	$ 1,160,000

D - Uses of Lots Now Zoned "Commercial"	No. of Lots	Percent
Stores, other Commercial	195	15
Multi-Family Dwellings	52	5
Single-Family Dwellings	280	24
Vacant	650	56
Total	1177	100

E - Lots Available for Multi-Family Use After Rezoning	No. of Lots
In areas to remain Commercial (Vacant Lots)	508
In proposed Second Residential Areas (Vacant Lots)	445
Total	953
Additional vacant lots on opposite sides of Taraval and Judah Streets.	230

F - Corner Lots Now Used for Residences	No. of Lots	Percent
Single-Family Dwellings	581	93
Multi-Family Dwellings	46	7
Total	627	100

These figures show that the cost of additional paving at corner lots has not notably limited their use for single-family dwellings.

G - Comparison of Typical Lot Sizes	Square Feet
Areas of Lots on Avenues in Sunset District	3,000
Areas of Lots on Streets " " "	2,500
Areas of smallest lots " " "	1,437
Average Area of Lots " " "	2,665
Minimum Requirement in Sunset District	None
" " Oakland	4,000
" " Berkeley	4,000
" " Alameda	4,000
" " Martinez	4,000
" " San Mateo	4,000
" " Redwood City	5,000
" " Palo Alto	5,000
" " San Bruno	5,000
" " FHA Standards (outside S.F.)	4,000

The above figures are introduced to clarify certain questions regarding the ultimate population of the Sunset District and the possible effect of limiting the use of land to single-family dwellings. The row house characteristic of the area, each unit of which is generally a single-family home, provides a population density nearly twice as great as that found in the most densely developed single-family home neighborhoods of other Bay Area communities.

H - Areas of Residential Districts (Entire City)

Approximate Areas Before Proposed Sunset Rezoning	Acres
First Residential Districts	4,500
Second Residential Districts	5,900
Residential Use of Commercial Districts	800
Total Residential Area	11,200

Approximate Areas After Proposed Sunset Rezoning	
First Residential Districts	5,400
Second Residential Districts	5,000
Residential Use of Commercial Districts	800

Population Attainable After Proposed Rezoning	Population
1st Residential areas 5400 acres @ 50 persons per ac.	270,000
2nd Residential areas 5000 acres @ 120 persons " "	600,000
Commercial areas 800 acres @ 165 persons per acre	132,000
Total	1,002,000

In 1940 approximately one-third of the population of San Francisco lived in single-family homes. This ratio can be maintained without hazard or handicap until San Francisco has attained a population of over one million persons within the present City limits. In fact the official policies of this City should encourage family life and the development and protection of home neighborhoods in areas where such uses are entirely proper and involve no conflict with other uses.

IV. - SUMMARIES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

The Planning Commission, with the aid of its technical staff, has thoroughly considered the rezoning of the Sunset District. The proposed change has been studied with regard to the welfare of both

the District and of the City as a whole. The Commission has endeavored also to ascertain and evaluate the diverse opinions of the homeowners and holders of vacant land in the area.

Maps Prepared

For the information of the public, large-scale maps showing the Present Land Uses, the Existing Zoning, and the Proposed Reclassification of the Sunset District, as set forth in Bill 2781, were prepared and exhibited at four public hearings and in the office of the City Planning Commission. An additional map has been made showing the revised zoning plan as recommended by the City Planning Commission.

Notices of Hearings and Meetings

Official notice of the informal hearing held on March 23, was published in the official newspaper, the San Francisco Chronicle, on March 21, 1944.

An outline of the rezoning proposal and a schedule of the meetings and hearings was mailed on March 16, 1944 to the following:

Newspapers	8
Organizations	36
Property Owners	323
Other Individuals	27

Among the newspapers which gave publicity to the proposal were the following:

Examiner - news article	February 29
Sunset News - complete proposal	March 9
News - news article	March 23
Call Bulletin - editorial	March 27
Examiner - news article	April 7

1st Public Hearing

An informal public hearing was held in the Sunset District, at the Lincoln School, at 7:30 p.m., March 23. The City Planning Commission, representatives of its staff and approximately 150 interested citizens attended. The maps and the details of the rezoning proposal were explained by the Director of Planning and all who wished to speak or ask questions were given an opportunity to do so. The speakers were invited to submit their proposals in writing.

2nd Public Hearing

An informal public hearing was held at the Lawton School at 7:30 p.m., March 27. The City Planning Commission, representatives of its staff and approximately 125 citizens attended. The maps and features of the Sunset Reclassification plan were explained by members of the technical staff, and the Commission heard the comments and suggestions of the public.

3rd and 4th Public Hearings

Formal hearings were held at the City Hall at 3:00 p.m. on March 30 and April 4. The Planning Commission, representatives of its technical staff and approximately 75 citizens attended these meetings.

Meetings with Organizations

Members of the staff of the City Planning Department also conferred with representatives of the Sunset Community Improvement Club, the Parkside Improvement Club, the Great Highway Improvement Club, the Associated Homebuilders, Inc., the S.F. Realty Association, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and other interested groups.

Written Communications Received

Letters requesting information or from persons whose property will not be affected by the rezoning	7
Letters from organizations favoring the rezoning	4
Letters from individuals favoring the rezoning	12
Letters from organizations opposing the rezoning	1
Letters from individuals opposing the rezoning	10
Total	34

According to the written communications and the statements made at the public hearings, generally the homeowners and residents of the Sunset District favor the general objectives of the proposed reclassification plan. The real estate agents, builders and owners of vacant lots generally opposed features of the plan which they deemed detrimental to their particular property interests. Few expressed unqualified disapproval of the entire rezoning proposal. The main lines of argument were as follows:

Arguments in Support of The Rezoning Plan

1. The Sunset District is established as a community of moderate cost single-family homes.

2. The established character of the neighborhood is conducive to family and community life, and the rearing of children.

3. Thousands of families have invested their savings in individual homes in the Sunset because they want to live in San Francisco.

4. The homeowners who live in the district have a direct interest in the established character of the neighborhood. They believe they have a right to say what the district shall be in the future.

5. The fact that under the existing Second Residential zoning "tenement houses, flats, boarding houses or lodging houses and hotels" may be built on almost any lot is a constant threat to the established character and stability of the Sunset District.

6. The uncertain future of the district under the Second Residential classification is disturbing to the residents of the district; no one knows what will happen after the war.

7. San Francisco has a number of attractive single-family residential districts where the homes of families in the higher income brackets are adequately protected by First Residential zoning. The Sunset should be protected, too.

8. That the extent of the Commercial zones is greatly in excess of the need or demand is shown by the fact that numerous lots zoned Commercial are actually used for single-family and multiple-family residences. There have been many unsuccessful business ventures in the district.

Arguments in Opposition to The Rezoning Plan

1. The proposal is confiscatory, because owners of vacant lots to be zoned First Residential would not be permitted to construct multi-family dwellings thereon, and because owners of some lots now zoned Commercial would not be permitted to use them for that purpose.

2. The owners of corner lots have paid high prices, taxes and street assessments and therefore should be permitted to build apartment buildings to capitalize this investment.

3. The zoning of the entire Sunset District is satisfactory and should remain unchanged.

4. The rezoning of the Sunset District should not be comprehensive, but only those blocks which are now 90% built up with single-family homes should be rezoned First Residential. This would give a checkered zoning pattern.

5. The proposed change from Second Residential to First Residential zoning should be made, as proposed, except that all corner lots should remain in the Second Residential classification.

6. The proposed rezoning will depreciate property values and result in a higher tax rate for homeowners.

7. The Sunset District offers "the only remaining developed locations to support flats, duplexes and multiple-family dwellings". The proposed rezoning would provide an excessive amount of First Residential property.

6. The [illegible] failure of the District Court to the Second Circuit [illegible] is [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

V. - ZONING AND THE MASTER PLAN

The major interest of the City Planning Commission now is the Master Plan. This will be a guide to the future improvement of San Francisco. It will outline a broad postwar program of construction and development, including new streets and highways, airports, sewers, parks, schools and playgrounds. The Sunset District will have its proper share of these projects.

Before the sections of the Master Plan dealing with the needs of the Sunset District can be prepared, the future of the area must be clearly defined. Uncertainty regarding its course of development increases the difficulty of planning sewers, transportation, fire and police services, schools and playgrounds. The present zoning of the Sunset creates uncertainty and instability.

The Master Plan of San Francisco, boiled down to essentials, is (1) a land use plan establishing proper relationships between private and public areas and minimum essential guides and controls for the uses of private land and (2) plans and programs of construction on public areas, to provide the City with new streets, buildings, utilities and other needed improvements. The land area of this City is limited and the uses to which it may be put are restricted by hills and other topographic conditions. A special burden of responsibility is consequently placed upon those who determine the ratio of uses in any zoning plan. The Sunset District was obviously over-zoned for Second Residential and for Commercial. The ratio of use established in 1921 proved by development to have been wrong.

San Francisco is an apartment city and over 50 per cent of its area is now zoned to permit multiple-family dwellings. The row houses characteristic of the Sunset would be classed as apartment construction in most other cities of California. Using the Sunset wholly for single-family purposes would still leave sufficient area zoned Second Residential to give the City a population well over a million.

The 42 square miles of the corporate area of San Francisco are precious. If this space is used wisely, the greatness of San Francisco is assured for many generations. The zoning plan is in a sense the land budget of the City. It represents the official judgment of the City regarding the expenditure or use of these important land resources. The Master Plan must, therefore, rest upon a firm land use foundation. The Planning Commission must encourage, whenever possible, the improvement of the methods by which space in this City is allocated and directed into the various types of uses.

V. - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A - Reclassification From Second to First Residential

The principal question raised by the Sunset rezoning is: Should the Sunset District continue to develop as a single-family home district with adequate zoning protection, or should it remain open to "tenement houses, apartment houses, flats, boarding houses and hotels"? The City Planning Commission unanimously recommends that the Sunset District generally be classified First Residential.

In spite of 23 years of Second Residential zoning, the Sunset District has been developed as a single-family home neighborhood.

More than 10,200 individual homes represent the major investment in the area. The homeowners who have their savings in these homes live in and constitute the Sunset community. They have a paramount interest in the character and stability of the district.

Rezoning to preserve the value of the existing large investments and to protect the quality of the neighborhood is proper because the financial interests of the predominant group (the single-family homeowners) are greatly in excess of all other interests in the area.

The owners of single-family homes pay 6 times as much taxes as the owners of vacant lots. The assessed value of their investments is 13 times the assessed value of the vacant areas.

The proposed rezoning will leave adequate space for Second Residential developments in more suitable areas. More than 950 lots that may be used for multi-family dwellings will remain within the boundaries of the area under consideration after this rezoning. The First Residential zoning will not be excessive, even for a city of over 1,000,000 population.

Land crowding and the intrusion of apartments and commercial structures into single-family neighborhoods have contributed materially to the exodus of San Franciscans to home areas outside the City. Consequently, the tendency toward land crowding and disorderly development should be abated rather than increased.

A scattering of multi-family buildings throughout the Sunset will be detrimental to the district. The consensus of opinion is that the best residential districts throughout the country and in San Francisco are protected by First Residential zoning.

A selective Second Residential zoning for all corner lots in areas to be First Residential would be impractical and undesirable. No precedent for such "wholesale spot zoning" has been found. Records in the office of the Assessor show that assessments of undeveloped residential lots have not been increased because of a Second Residential classification. The predominance of single-family dwellings on the corner lots which have been developed indicates that the extra cost of paving adjacent to them is not out of line for single-family homes.

B - Reduction of Commercial Zones on Noriega and Lawton Streets

The Commercial districts on Lawton and Noriega Streets are small and will have considerable value in the future as neighborhood service centers. A reduction in the size of these business districts might be justified in the light of the excessive areas zoned for business along Irving, Judah, Taraval and Vicente but the Planning Commission regards such a reduction of these small commercial centers as inadvisable at the present time. The Commission, therefore, recommends that the areas now zoned Commercial on Lawton and Noriega be retained without change.

It is desirable to have convenient shopping centers at various locations in the areas, but the number of lots now zoned Commercial is greatly in excess of the number of business establishments that

can be supported by the Sunset District.

Although the hope of great financial gain from commercial developments is great in the minds of some of the holders of vacant lots, the actual development of much of the commercially zoned land has been residential.

The present over-zoning of these commercial districts is likely to result in a disorderly mixture of uses instead of more attractive, compact shopping centers.

The Planning Commission believes that these facts should be recognized and that realisitic rezoning should replace the present commercial zoning of the Noriega and Lawton centers. However, these districts are partially adjusted to the possible introduction of commercial uses, and the Commission considers that this matter may be held in abeyance until a later time, when the limitation of commercial development shall have become more apparent to the property owners involved.

C - Rezoning 48th Avenue from Commercial to Second Residential

The commercial district established along 48th Avenue when the zoning ordinance was first adopted in 1921 has proved throughout the years to be unsound. The Planning Commission, therefore, recommends that 48th Avenue from Lawton to Taraval with the exception of the corners of Noriega Street be reclassified from Commercial to Second Residential.

Overzoning property for business does not create business, or establish business values. Purchasing power alone, which is a compound of population and earning capacity, determines the amount of business in a given area, and this index should guide the City in the establishment of commercial districts. The amount of business area in the established commercial districts along Irving, Judah, Taraval, and Noriega is far in excess of the needs of the Sunset. The elimination of 48th Avenue will bring about a more favorable balance in the Commercial.

A shoestring commercial district along a street like 48th Avenue could not be justified now or later even if the Sunset were completely built up. The business district lies below the Great Highway, is difficult to reach from the Great Highway, and borders the westerly, most inaccessible side of the residential area.

Although several of these blocks have been used for residential construction, the full development of 48th Avenue has been held back by the existence of the commercial zoning. Residential construction has been retarded, and some undesirable commercial uses have been introduced. Considering its remote location, the absence of a buying population on the west and the excessive commercial zoning on Judah, Noriega and Taraval Sts., no substantial area for business need be provided on 48th Avenue.

Some of the owners of property on this avenue have objected on the basis of their anticipated profits from commercial developments. However, other owners are in favor of the change to the Second Residential zoning. The majority of opinion, even of persons opposed to other portions of the rezoning plan, has been favorable to this proposal.

The retention of frontage on 47th Avenue in the commercial classification creates uncertainty and confusion with respect to property values and tends to retard the development of highly valuable space for residential purposes.

As long as 48th Avenue is zoned Commercial there is always the possibility of cheap, ugly and otherwise objectionable improvements entering the district and adding to the somewhat disorderly appearance of the property when seen from the Great Highway.

The ocean frontage of San Francisco, of which 48th Avenue is to a certain extent the backbone, should be encouraged to grow and develop as a uniformly high-grade, attractive apartment and hotel area. It cannot attain this character as long as it remains zoned Commercial.

The property owners along 48th Avenue will benefit directly and quickly from the rezoning of 48th Avenue from Commercial to Second Residential. The danger of invasion of the district by inappropriate and value-destroying uses will be materially lessened by the rezoning.

D - Nineteenth Avenue Zoning Unchanged

As shown on the map titled "Existing Land Uses", a number of commercial uses have been introduced along 19th Avenue, not only at locations zoned Commercial, but also at other places as "Non-conforming" uses. This heritage of past zoning practice has decreased the desirability of this strip for single-family use. Consequently, the City Planning Commission concurs in the recommendation that the area as designated on the map remain Second Residential.

E - Commercial Zoning Along Judah and Taraval Streets

No change from the present Commercial classification along Judah and Taraval Streets has been proposed. These areas are also excessive for commercial uses, but the rezoning of other parts of the Sunset District doubtless will stimulate a desirable increased use of these strips for multiple-family dwellings. Although realistic rezoning of these streets should be considered at a later time, the Planning Commission recommends that the zoning along Judah and Taraval Streets remain unchanged at this time.

F - Height Limit Regulations

At the public hearings held by the Planning Commission, several real estate agents recommended the enactment of building height limits. The homeowners were also in favor of such regulations. The City Planning Commission, therefore, recommends that a supplementary ordinance be drawn establishing a

height limit of 40 feet on property along 48th Avenue and on all property lying between this street and the Great Highway, from Lincoln Way to Sloat Blvd.

Many people have purchased homes in the Sunset in order to enjoy views of the ocean. The present uniformity of height throughout the single-family home areas contributes greatly to the enjoyment of views throughout the area. The establishment of a height limitation along the Great Highway would have considerable value and insure the preservation of views for 90% of the homeowners in the Sunset District.

The forty-foot height limitation will permit the construction of four-story apartment buildings along the Great Highway. This is the maximum height now permitted for frame structures by the building code.

The views from dwellings on all the slopes east of 43rd Avenue will be protected by this restriction. The benefits of this regulation will be enjoyed ultimately by the occupants of approximately 15,000 homes throughout the Sunset District.

The Board of Supervisors have established height limitations in the Marina, in Pacific Heights, and on Telegraph Hill. The Board has the power on the basis of this recommendation from the City Planning Commission to establish the recommended height limitation in the Sunset District.

KIRKHAM

LAWTON

MORAGA

NORIEGA

ORTEGA

PACHECO

QUINTARA

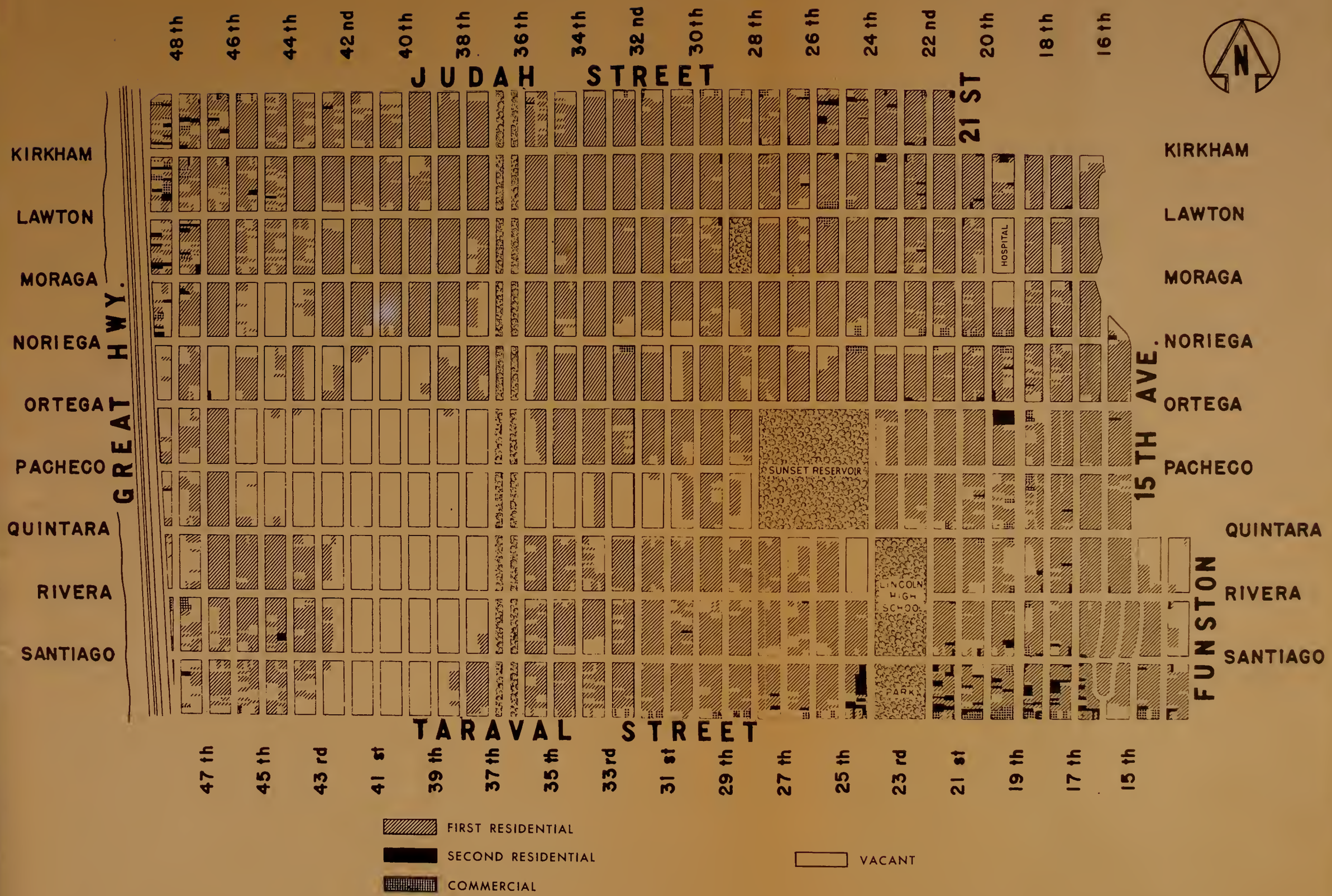
RIVERA

SANTIAGO

GREAT HWY.

S A N

EXISTING LAND USES



SAN FRANCISCO CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 1944

KIRKHAM

LAWTON

MORAGA

NORIEGA

ORTEGA

PACHECO

QUINTARA

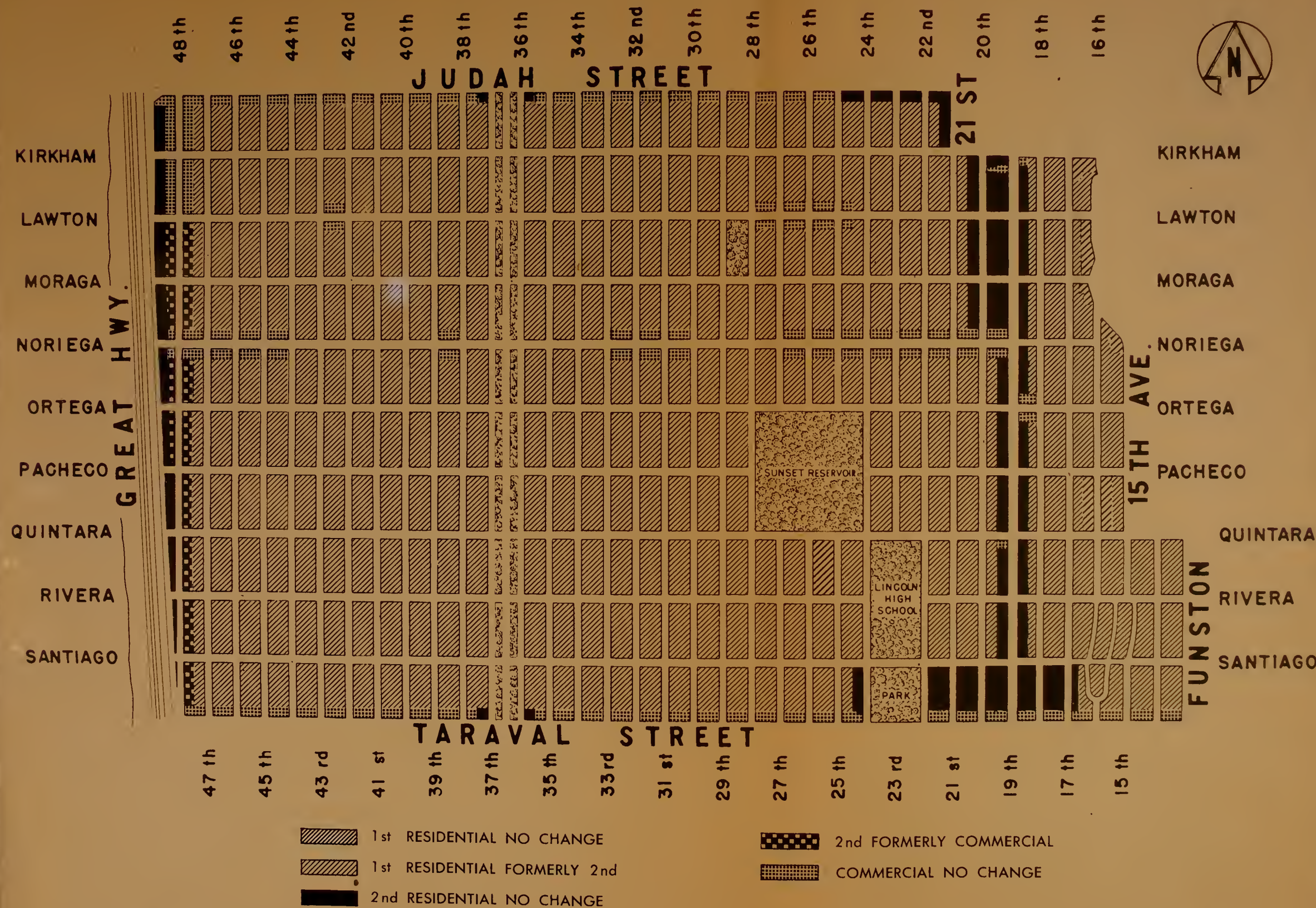
RIVERA

SANTIAGO

GREAT HWY.

S

PROPOSED RECLASSIFICATION OF THE SUNSET DISTRICT



SAN FRANCISCO CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 1944

PAULSEN.

MEMORANDUM ON SUNSET REZONING

Presented by Supervisor Chester R. MacPhee

When the Sunset-Parkside District was originally zoned some twenty years ago it was a vast, streetless area of shifting sand dunes. For reasons which may have seemed logical at the time, the District was zoned Second Residential to permit the construction of flats and apartment houses characteristic of older sections of the city.

Within recent years this District has developed largely with single-family homes. These single-family units are generally in rows on 25 foot lots, but scattered about through the district are numerous vacant parcels.

The undeveloped lots and parcels of land are today the vulnerable spots in this area. Through these openings, rental structures and certain other types of property uses may enter and, like an infection, destroy the pleasant, home-like quality of the neighborhood.

Multiple dwellings when mixed with single-family homes introduce problems and complications which vex both the neighborhood and the City. They require more extensive means of transportation, more car lines and more utilities, fire and police stations, and so on. They encourage the establishment of garages, service stations and other businesses. A sound, well-built city will not have multiple dwellings scattered through a district devoted mainly to a less intensive, more individual type of home.

Property values and attractive home conditions can be maintained in this section of the city for a long time if the harmonious and practically uniform character of present development can be extended and protected. The first step is to improve the zoning plan by making the area a First Residential District.

Existing Conditions in The Sunset District

Area - The proposed rezoning would cover an area of 2.6 square miles bounded by the Great Highway, Judah Street, 21st Avenue, Kircham Street, 16th Avenue, 15th Avenue, Quintara Street, Funston Avenue and Taraval Street.

Types of Structures - In the area as defined, there are 317 blocks. These contain approximately 16,000 lots, of which about two-thirds, or 10,500, have been built upon.

There are 10,087 single-family dwellings in this area, most of them built within the last 15 years. These represent an investment of about fifty million dollars; they are the homes of families who have bought a stake in San Francisco.

Two-family residential structures number 208, or about 2% of the total, and only 36 structures are for three or more families.

Lot Sizes - The prevailing lot size is 3000 square feet (25 by 120), but because of smaller lots at the ends of blocks the average is about 2665 square feet. Most of the scattered lots now vacant are clearly more adaptable to single-family dwellings than to flats or apartment houses.

Extent of Development - Of the 317 blocks, 77 have no vacant residential lots, and 37 blocks still have only 1 or 2 lots undeveloped.

Another 52 blocks have only 3 to 6 vacant building sites remaining.

In all, 238 blocks have more than half the lots occupied, while 74 have less than half (36 blocks being entirely vacant).

Rate of Growth - Five years ago there were in this area 6,750 dwelling units and about 21,000 persons, as estimated from the Real Property Survey. Today, there are 10,674 dwelling units, and over 33,000 persons, according to recent field checks. Thus the increase in the last 5 years was 58%. Practically all the new building has been of single-family dwellings. This rapid increase indicates the importance of immediate protective action.

Present Zoning - Portions of 7 blocks (1862A, 1927A, 2033A, 2136, 2052A, 2135 and 2192) are already zoned First Residential, allowing single-family dwellings only, but the remaining 310 blocks are now all in Second Residential, permitting any type of multiple residence (flats or apartment houses), excepting the frontage in the Commercial Districts on Taraval Street, 48th Avenue, Judah Street, west of 25th Avenue, and at certain points on Lawton Street, Noriega Street, Ortega Street, and 19th Avenue.

Trends of Development - Recently, there has been a tendency to increase the number of families provided for in each block. In some cases 3 two-family dwellings have been placed on small corner lots. A few multiple dwellings have appeared, disturbing the harmonious appearance of the neighborhood.

But in most instances the additional houses have been introduced by making smaller lots at the ends of blocks. This is an injurious trend, also due to the lack of proper building standards. The lot area for a single-family home is required to be not less than 4000 square feet in every city of the Bay Region, except San Francisco and Daly City. Here, builders may cut property into lots of any size.

Assessed Values and Taxes - The owners of occupied residence lots in the area, assessed collectively at about $22,000,000, pay into the city treasury each year approximately $1,000,000. The owners of the vacant lots, of which there are about 5000 assessed, on the average, at $350 each, pay annually only about $160,000.

Commercial Areas - There are now about 67 acres classified as Commercial, of which only 13 acres or 20% are in use. After re-classification as proposed, there would still remain 45 acres in the Commercial District, over 3 times the amount now used.

Since the district is about two-thirds built-up, it is clear that if the present trends of development continue, there will be no demand for much of the land now zoned Commercial. Some lots in these areas zoned for business are already occupied by single residences and more, now vacant, would be put to the same use if protected by re-classification.

The re-classification of a few lots now zoned Commercial would give greater protection to homes in the vicinity, and would promote the construction of dwellings on lots never likely to be needed for business purposes, and increase the stability and maintain values of established business centers.

Non-conforming Uses - In the area suggested to be re-classified as First Residential a few dwellings of other types already exist. These would not be disturbed, nor become illegal as a result of such a change. They would remain as "non-conforming" uses.

There would be in all 102 such buildings, forming less than 1% of the total. Twenty-eight of the blocks would have one each, and 24 blocks from 2 to 5 non-conforming structures - the remaining 265 blocks none.

The extremely small number of non-conforming uses which the proposed zoning would produce is a clear indication of how well it fits the situation.

Recommended Procedure

Adequate protection for home values in the Sunset-Parkside area can best be provided by the immediate re-classification from Second to First Residential of several hundred blocks.

1. The attached map shows the area most obviously suitable for an immediate rezoning.

2. The text of an ordinance amending the zoning map is presented herewith.

3. The proposed amendment should be referred to the City Planning Commission for recommendation and report.

4. Hearings will be held before the Committee on Public Buildings, Lands and City Planning of the Board of Supervisors.

5. After receiving reports from its Committee and from the City Planning Commission, the ordinance will be reported to and be considered at regular meetings of the Board of Supervisors.

Tentative Re-Classification Maps

The proposed rezoning plan is indicated on the attached tentative map. It shows the following desirable re-classifications:

From Second to First Residential - All lots now classified as Second Residential in the area bounded by 48th Avenue, Judah Street, 21st Avenue, Kirkham Street, 16th Avenue, 15th Avenue, Quintara Street, Funston Avenue, and Taraval Street, excepting those which face on Judah Street, on 21st Avenue north of Kirkham Street, on 20th Avenue north of Noriega Street; on 19th Avenue, and south of Santiago Street on 17th, 18th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 24th Avenues.

From Commercial to First Residential - All lots now classified as Commercial which face on Noriega Street between 25th and 27th Avenues, between 30th and 32nd Avenues, and between 44th and 47th Avenues, and on Lawton Street from 28th Avenue to a point midway between 27th and 26th Avenues.

From Commercial to Second Residential - All lots now classified as Commercial which face on 48th Avenue between Lawton and Taraval Streets, except at the corners of Noriega Street and Taraval Street.

Total Zoned 1st Resid = 4853 Acres (net)
- 366
4487 Acres max net area.

Balboa Res = 34
Glen Park " = 66
Mt.D. Park = 34
134
Hts. Pt. Area = 232
366

Additional Area = 900 Acres
5387 Acres (1st Resid.)

COMPARISON OF BLOCKS HAVING
IMPROVEMENTS OF EQUAL AGE

SUNSET DISTRICT

	Land	Buildings	Total	Per Acre
Block 1719	$ 35,220	$ 63,550	$ 98,770	$ 30,000
(Lincoln Way, Irving St. 31st and 32nd Sts.) Completely developed - single-family residences.				

RICHMOND DISTRICT

Block 1407 (California St. Clement St. 26th & 27th Sts.)	$ 47,550	$ 67,000	$ 114,550	$ 34,600
Mixed uses				
Block 1647 Fulton St. Cabrillo St. 4th & 5th Sts.)	38,660	51,350	90,010	33,300
Good Single-family development				

[illegible]

SUNSET DISTRICT

	Land	Buildings	Total	Per Ac
Block 1713	$ 35,220	$ 63,550	$ 98,770	$ 30,0
(Lincoln Hwy, Irving St. 31st and 32nd Sts.) Completely developed - single-family residences.				

RICHMOND DISTRICT

Block 1407 (California St. Clement St. 20th & 27th Sts.)	$ 47,550	$ 67,000	$ 114,550	$ 34,5
Mixed uses				
Block 1647 Fulton St. Cabrillo St. 4th & 5th Sts.) Good single-family development	38,650	51,350	90,000	73,3